

State of Illinois IBEW, SB 2814 and FEJA (Future Energy Jobs Act)—Solar Victory!

Bi-partisan state legislature voted and passed a very complex SB 2814 bill and sent it to the Governor to sign on December 7, 2016. SB 2814 contained a provision in the bill called Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA), which will strengthen the Illinois economy by taking important our state's clean energy future and preserving competitive energy rates. FEJA will:

- Stimulate job creation with new investments in energy efficiency, and renewable energy
- Enhance Illinois position as a leader in the clean energy economy
- Preserve Illinois' low energy rates for residents and businesses
- Commit up to \$750 million for low-income communities to save money and also to benefit from clean energy
- Strengthen and expand the current Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to ensure stable funding for renewable development, providing \$180 million per year and up to \$220 million per year for renewable energy including NEW wind power, large-scale solar power, and rooftop and community solar
- Provide job training and create thousands of clean energy jobs in energy efficiency, energy innovation, and renewable power industries
- \$30 million in funding to help train Illinois workforce for future energy jobs by diverting the funds into three job-training programs- a solar training pipeline, a craft apprenticeship program and a multicultural jobs program
- Protect consumers with a 25-cent monthly cost impact for residential customers through 2030 and a 1.3% cap for businesses.
- Beginning June 1, 2017, the timeline for new solar and wind power projects:
 - By 2020- 650 mW wind and 1350 mW solar
 - By 2025- 1,000 mW wind and 2000 mW solar
 - By 2030 -1350 mW wind and 2700 mW solar

The Future Energy Jobs Act (Senate Bill 2814) is one of the most significant pieces of energy legislation ever to pass the Illinois General Assembly. It followed nearly two years of negotiations between energy companies, consumer advocates, labor advocates and environmental groups. Donald Finn, IBEW 134 Business Manager/Financial Secretary, was instrumental in these negotiations by providing assistance and discussion on the economic impact as well as the creation of thousands of clean energy jobs for the citizens of Illinois.

Com Ed will be providing \$30 million over a period of ten years for solar training for future energy jobs. There will be three phases of the job training with each phase awarding \$10 million dollars over a period of three years. The \$10 million dollars will be awarded to three main job-training programs:

- Solar training program- \$3 million to be awarded
- Craft apprenticeship program- \$3 million to be awarded
- Multicultural jobs program - \$4 million to be awarded.

IBEW 134 submitted a comprehensive RFP (Request for Proposal) for the \$3 million craft apprenticeship program. The ICC (Illinois Commerce Commission) based on the recommendation of an independent review board awarded IBEW 134 the \$3 million craft apprenticeship funding.

IBEW RFP for solar training consists of 4 components. The end- result is to train, and educate an individual who will become a qualified IBEW solar installer and who will be employed by a union IBEW contractor. IBEW map to a successful solar training program needs to start early in the solar career. The components include:

- Junior High School solar program
- High School solar pre-apprenticeship program
- Community College solar program
- IBEW apprenticeship program

State of Illinois IBEW

- 17 State of Illinois inside IBEW organization throughout the state
- “Standardized” hands- on solar training kits
- Development and implementation of “Standardized” 56 hour solar classroom training curriculum based on NABCEP Learning Objectives
- IBEW Instructor TTT for solar instruction and support to be conducted at IBEW 134 Alsip facility. 40 hour face-to-face and 20 hours hands on instruction plus 15-20 hours additional online training
- Development and implementation of solar site assessment program through MREA for technical sales program for those who do not want to be an installer.
- Solar instruction and hands-on training will be completed at each IBEW training facility.

Selected Community College Solar Program

- 6 State of Illinois Community Colleges in low-income districts selected throughout the state of Illinois
- Work with IGEN – Illinois Green Economy Network in implementing community college programs.
- Southwestern Illinois Community College is one of the 6 community colleges selected
- Community college instructor Train the Trainer and support program to be held at IBEW 134 Alsip facility
- Solar program will be two phases
 - Phase I will include 40 hours classroom face-to-face instruction on solar and 16 hours of hands-on lab.
 - Phase II will implement additional classroom courses for certifications and degree program

Selected Solar Pre-Apprenticeship High School Programs

- 6 State of Illinois high schools in low income districts whose students that would a pathway into IBEW apprenticeship program or community college solar program.

- “Standardized” hands- on solar training kits
- Development and implementation of “Standardized” solar classroom training curriculum

Selected Junior High School Solar Program

- Structured for the 7th and 8th grade students whose school districts have a high school pre-apprentice program.

As part of additional solar education, the IBEW has purchase a vehicle and retrofit it for renewable energy displays. The “traveling solar road show” will include presentations on basic electricity concepts, renewable energy technology concepts such as wind, solar and energy storage. The “traveling road show” will travel throughout the state of Illinois to the IBEW locals, high schools, and junior high schools.to promote renewable energy technologies.

IBEW 134 and all State of Illinois IBEW locals will benefit immensely from the solar craft apprenticeship funding because of the FEJA bill. Don Finn has stated, “The FEJA bill has been in the works for over 2 years in which IBEW 134 and all State of Illinois IBEW were actively proactive instead reactive during this process. Renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency concepts will have a tremendous impact for employment opportunities for our members for years to come. We believe that reaching out to high schools and help them develop renewable energy curriculum and promoting renewable energy education will enhance IBEW ability to actively recruit potential IBEW members that will solidified and produce a qualified workforce.”